



FACT SHEET: The REINS Act (H.R. 26) is a Blatant Power Grab That Would Needlessly Threaten Public Safety

- *H.R. 26 would allow special interests to rewrite the rules*
- *H.R. 26 is a blatantly political attempt to grind the business of government to a complete halt*
- *H.R. 26 would make it harder for real people to have a say in the rule-making process*
- *H.R. 26 would make it impossible to protect public health, worker safety, the environment and consumer interests—as well as undermine many bedrock public interest laws*

H.R. 26 would allow special interests to write the rules

The “Regulations from the Executive In Need of Scrutiny” (REINS) Act is an “ideologically driven bill to erode federal protections for consumers and communities.” H.R. 26 requires Congress to vote to approve all “major” rules, defined as having an economic impact of \$100 million or more, within 70 legislative days of the rule’s finalization. If Congress does not approve the rule, it is tabled until the next Congress.

[Conyers, [1/5/17](#); [H.R. 26](#)]

- **The bill is redundant.** Rulemaking is a lengthy, transparent process that gets its authority from legislative statute debated and passed by Congress. In the process of rulemaking, an agency cannot “take action that goes beyond its statutory authority or violates the Constitution.” H.R. 26 would essentially require Congress to pass a bill twice, with a second opportunity for special interests to get their way. [[Federal Registrar](#)]

By imposing unnecessary deadlines on Congress, H.R. 26 would put the lobbyists in charge. Congress long ago decided “some kind of decisions required deep technical expertise and a balanced, judicious decision process.” This bill would limit the amount of time Congress could debate proposed regulations and “torque the regulatory process in industry’s favor.” [House Judiciary Committee Testimony, [3/8/11](#)]

The bill would reduce transparency, making it harder for the public to know what’s going on. The bill requires Congress to act on a new major rule within 70 days or the rule becomes void. This would mean that no public vote would have to be taken to kill major public safety rules, letting “Congress’s notorious inability to act quickly to help kill important agency rules.” In the current process, all rulemaking, comments, and technical documentation is recorded and public. H.R. 26 would put the process behind the closed doors

on Capitol Hill, letting donors and lobbyists write the rules instead of working with agencies.
[New Republic, [2/10/11](#)]

It's a partisan attempt to rig the rules and undermine laws that protect real people

The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards, a group of over 150 consumer, small business, labor, health, environmental, and public interest groups, calls the bill a “back-door way to gut enforcement of existing legislation and future safeguards that big-money interests do not want” that would paralyze “vital agency work.” [CSS, [1/7/17](#)]

Republicans don't want the rules to apply to everyone. The effective date of the bill is “1 year after the date of enactment.” This is a new provision from previous versions of the law and would “make sure that REINS could not get in the way of Trump Administration efforts to repeal regulations.” [[H.R. 26](#); League of Women Voters, [1/17](#)]

H.R. 26 is backed by the Koch brothers because it will strip away federal oversight. Agency regulations include basic public safety measures from mandating seatbelts to reducing smog and pollution. Big corporations have been fighting regulations for decades, and this bill is their way of getting rid of them for good. In fact, “among the REINS Act's most vigorous supporters are the various lobbying organizations sponsored by the Koch brothers.” [The New Yorker, [1/9/17](#)]

Republicans love to say that regulations kill jobs. Economists say otherwise. The GOP claims that H.R. 26 will unshackle businesses from job-killing regulations. However, a landmark 2000 study showed that compliance with environmental regulations “generally does not cause a significant change in industry-level employment.” The Bureau of Labor statistics has concluded that “very few layoffs are caused principally by tougher rules.” [Washington Post, [11/13/11](#); [Resources for the Future](#)]

Republicans and their cronies want to gut rules that protect working families from shameless polluters, unscrupulous employers, and financial fraudsters

Watchdogs have serious concerns about what the H.R. 26 would do to crucial public safety, environmental, and consumer rules.

- **Dangerous for worker safety**
 - In 2015, the AFL-CIO opposed an earlier version of this legislation on the grounds that it represented “a grave threat to our government's ability to protect workers and the public from harm.” [AFL-CIO, [8/27/15](#)]
- **Dangerous for consumers**
 - Americans for Financial Reform called it “an enormous barrier to agency actions that protect the public from irresponsible or exploitative behavior by financial institutions. [AFR, [1/4/17](#)]
 - Consumers Union opposes H.R. 26 on the grounds that it “would tie up the regulatory process and work against the interests of consumers” on matters such as “tainted food, dirty air and water, invasions of privacy, and predatory financial schemes.” [CR-CU, [1/4/17](#)]
- **Dangerous for public health**

- The American Lung Association calls the bill “a dangerous attack on critical health protections” that would “delay or stop meaningful oversight of tobacco products,” “block critical clean air protections,” and result in “premature deaths and health problems that could have been avoided.” [American Lung Association, [1/3/17](#)]
- The American Public Health Association warns that the bill would “allow Congress to block other future major public health rules including those intended to protect the nation’s food supply, ensure worker safety and protect the public from toxic substances.” [APHA, [1/3/17](#)]